

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 048252
ORIGIN IO-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

66011

DRAFTED BY IO/ML:JLWASHBURN:SGH

APPROVED BY IO:EASWOPE

-----041515Z 020432 /44

R 040546Z MAR 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 048252

NESCO

FOL REPEAT TUNIS 1426 ACTION SECSTATE 02 MAR 77

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 1426

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, SOPN, TS

SUBJECT: NON-ALIGNED MEETING ON INFORMATION OPENS IN TUNIS

REF: STATE 42806

1. THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT'S INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL
ON INFORMATION AND MASS MEDIA OPENED MEETING IN TUNIS ON
FEBRUARY 28 WITH DELEGATIONS FROM FIFTEEN MEMBER COUNTRIES
AND SEVEN OBSERVERS. OPENING SESSION HEARD SPEECH BY GOT
PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA THAT EMPHASIZED NON-ALIGNED OBJECTIVES
OF CREATING "NEW INFORMATION ORDER" PARALLELING "NEW
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PAGE 02 STATE 048252

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER" IN THE CONTEXT OF DIALOGUE
AND COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. COUNCIL
IMMEDIATELY BEGAN WORK ON LONG AGENDA.

2. NOUIRA'S SPEECH TO COUNCIL WAS SIMILAR TO SPEECH HE
GAVE TO CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN AND ARAB PRESS AGENCIES
MEETING IN TUNIS IN NOVEMBER 1976 (SEE 76 TUNIS 8333, 26 NOV 76),

STRESSING THEMES THAT NON-ALIGNED NATIONS MUST ESTABLISH INFORMATION POLICY THAT SERVES THE NEEDS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IN FEB. 28 SPEECH, HOWEVER, HOUIRA NOTED THAT OBJECTIVITY SHOULD BE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF INFORMATION POLICY AND CRITICIZED "CERTAIN" JOURNALISTS OF WESTERN COUNTRIES FOR "ERRONEOUS CONCEPTION" OF THIRD WORLD AND A LACK OF OBJECTIVITY. HE SAID NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT SHOULD "COMBAT" MONOPOLIES OF INFORMATION AND SEEK FRUITFUL COOPERATION FOUNDED ON EQUALITY AND JUSTICE. HE SAID NAM PRESS POOLS AND THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES SHOULD COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER IN SERIOUS PARTNERSHIP RATHER THAN FALL INTO FRICTION AND RIVALRY.

3. TUNIS PRESS REPORTED THAT INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL AGENDA INCLUDES FOLLOWING SUBJECTS: (A) STUDY OF INTERNAL RULES FOR COUNCIL DRAFTED BY TUNISIA DEFINING STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE ORGANIZATION, (B) STUDY OF REPORT PREPARED BY TUNISIA AS COORDINATING COUNTRY ON NON-ALIGNED PERFORMANCE IN INFORMATION SPHERE, (C) STUDY OF MEANS TO IMPLEMENT ACTION PROGRAM ON INFORMATION POLICY ESTABLISHED AT COLOMBO SUMMIT, (D) STUDY OF COOPERATION BETWEEN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL AND UNESCO, (E) STUDY OF REPORT PREPARED BY INDIA ON WORK OF NON-ALIGNED PRESS POOLS SINCE COLOMBO SUMMIT, AND (F) STUDY OF REPORT PREPARED BY IRAQ IN ITS CAPACITY AS HOST FOR THE NEXT INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL MEETING. TUNIS PRESS ACCOUNT OF COUNCIL AGENDA NOTED THAT TUNISIA WILL REPORT ON PROGRESS MADE IN INFORMATION COOPERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE AND DECISION MADE BY UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE MEETING IN NAIROBI

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PAGE 03 STATE 048252

"FAVORING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW WORLD ORDER FOR INFORMATION." PRESS ALSO NOTED THAT TUNISIA WILL PRESENT RESOLUTION CONCERNING UNESCO EFFORTS FAVORING "DECOLONIZATION OF THE MEANS OF INFORMATION."

4. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICER ON FEBRUARY 22, MAHMOUD TRIKI (CHIEF OF THE TUNISIAN PRESS AGENCY AND PRINCIPAL ACTION OFFER IN GOT ON NON-ALIGNED INFORMATION POLICY) DISCUSSED GOT ATTITUDES TOWARD NON-ALIGNED PRESS POOLS AND THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY IN THE COUNCIL. HE STRESSED THAT TUNISIA WANTS MULTIPLICATION OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND NOT EXCLUSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS AGENCIES. HE NOTED IMPASSE AT RECENT CAIRO NON-ALIGNED MEETING ON INFORMATION POLICY AND ATTRIBUTED IT TO EFFORTS BY INDIA AND CUBA TO "GRAB" THE INITIATIVE IN NON-ALIGNED INFORMATION FOR THEIR PAROCHIAL PROPAGANDA OBJECTIVES. TUNISIA, HE SAID, OPPOSES THIS AND IS ENCOURAGING WHAT IT BELIEVES TO BE MORE FRUITFUL COURSES OF ACTION.

5. TRIKI MADE SPECIAL NOTE OF CUBAN EFFORTS TO HAVE PRENSA LATINA DESIGNATED AS THE NON-ALIGNED POOL FOR LATIN AMERICA. HE SAID THIS ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO MOST LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES SINCE CUBA WOULD DEPEND ON SOVIET TASS RESOURCES TO DISSEMINATE NEWS. HE SAID TUNISIA IS ENCOURAGING MEXICO TO USE NOTIMEX AS NON-ALIGNED PRESS POOL IN LATIN AMERICA TO COUNTER CUBAN EFFORTS.

6. TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT TUNISIA HOPES TO ACHIEVE IN NON-ULIGNED INFORMATION POLICY TRIKI CITED GROWING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIS AGENCY AND AGENCIES OF 12 ARAB STATES AND WITH WEST GERMAN AGENCY DPA. HE DESCRIBED THIS AS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION THAT EFFECTIVELY WIDENS NEWS SOURCES FOR ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

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PAGE 04 STATE 048252

7. COMMENT: NOUIRA SPEECH TO INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL APPEARS TO BE GENERALLY POSITIVE EXCEPT FOR ACCUSATION OF NON-OBJECTIVITY BY SOME WESTERN JOURNALISTS. IF READ IN CONTEXT OF TUNISIAN SITUATION, THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS NOUIRA'S RESENTMENT AGAINST NEWSMEN WHO REFUSE TO WRITE ARTICLES ABOUT HIS DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES THAT PRAISE HIM AS LAVISHLY AS THE TUNIS PRESS. IF READ IN THE CONTEXT OF NON-ALIGNED POLITICS, NOUIRA APPEARS TO BE "PLAYING TO THE GALLERIES" BY APPEALING TO THE PREJUDICES OF HIS MORE RADICAL GUESTS.

8. REQUEST DEPARTMENT DISSEMINATE AS DESIRED TO OTHER ADDRESEES. MULCAHY UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INFORMATION MEDIA, NONALIGNED NATIONS MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE048252
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JLWASHBURN:SGH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770075-0510
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770391/aaaadcof.tel
Line Count: 152
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d2afadbd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 42806
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3204608
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NON-ALIGNED MEETING ON INFORMATION OPENS IN TUNIS
TAGS: PFOR, PORO, SOPN, TS
To: BELGRADE COLOMBO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d2afadbd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009